

BV  
4523  
-L48



The University of Chicago  
Libraries



BV4523

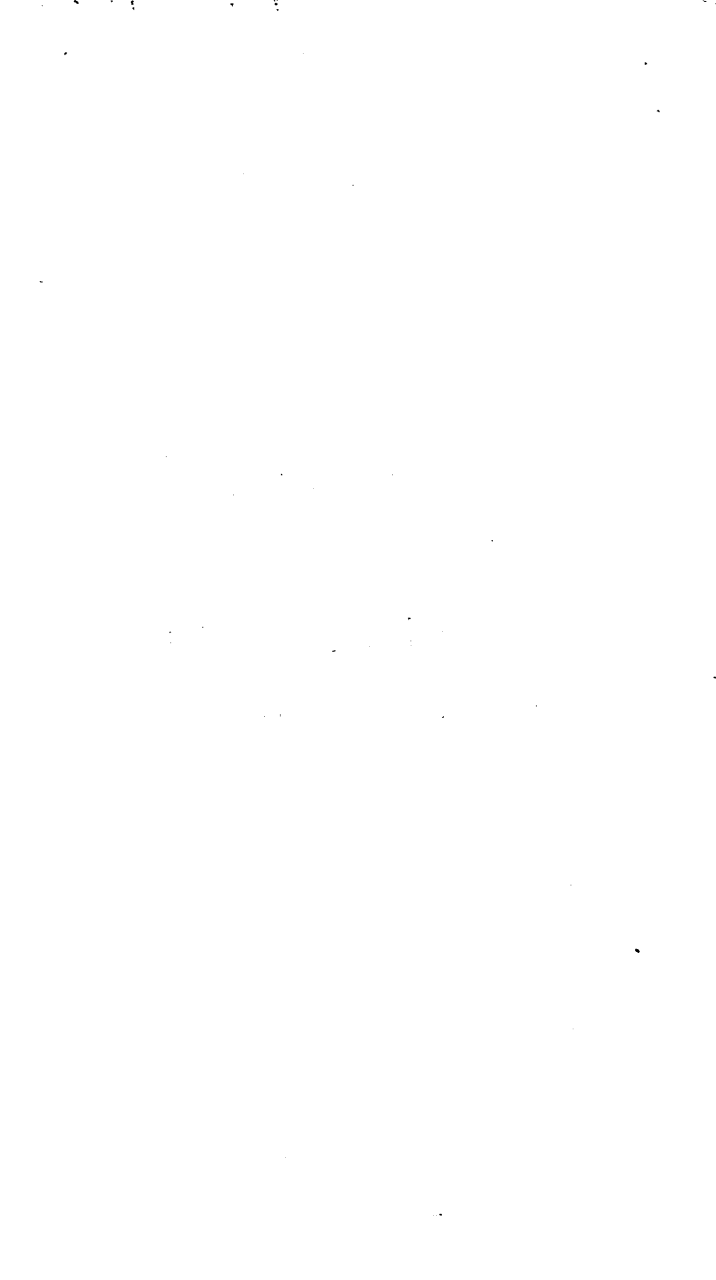
OCT 7 1931

L48 *copy*

AN ADDRESS

TO

PEOPLE WHO SELDOM OR NEVER  
GO TO CHURCH.



# AN ADDRESS

TO

PEOPLE WHO SELDOM OR NEVER  
GO TO CHURCH.

BY THE

REV. ROBERT LEE,  
MINISTER OF CAMPSIE.

“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, *as the manner of some is.*”—HEB. x. 25.

*Second Thousand.*

EDINBURGH:

JOHN JOHNSTONE, 2, HUNTER SQUARE,  
SUCCESSOR TO WAUGH AND INNES.

---

MDCCCXXXVII.

BV4523  
L48



Leon  
Rosen

ch.

## AN ADDRESS, &c.

---

MY FRIENDS,—There are many questions which cannot be satisfactorily answered, there are many which are not worth answering, and there are many which may be answered most distinctly, and are so important, that no man should give himself a day's rest till he has settled them to his complete satisfaction. It seems to me, that this question, "Whether it is your duty to attend Church?" is of the last kind, being an inquiry both which may be, and which ought to be, decided upon by every man for himself, without delay.

What is contained in the following paper, I have written with the view of persuading those of my own parishioners, who absent themselves from the house of prayer, to consider the subject. And if God shall be pleased to bless my weak, though sincere, endeavours to them, or to any others into whose hands this paper may fall, I shall give thanks to God for the same all the days of my life. And let me entreat the reader, if he is a neglecter of God's house, seriously to read what



is here written. The subject is worth half an hour's consideration. And who knows whether God may not give him repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.

And if the reader be himself one of those who love the gates of Zion, the place where God's honour dwelleth, and who, happily, do not need this appeal, may I beg this kindness of him, that he will put it into the hands of some one whom he knows to be far both from God and from his ordinances. Such persons are, alas, become so numerous, that every one knows many such. God is often pleased to bless even the weakest representations of truth to effect the most salutary and important purposes.

A Christian is a person who obeys Jesus Christ ; and any one who is not seeking to make Christ's will his rule, is not a Christian but a heathen. He may have been baptized when a child, and he may wish himself to be reckoned a Christian, now that he is grown a man ; it matters not, he is a heathen in reality, just as much as if he had lived in China or Japan ; he is, in truth, more a child of wrath than the veriest pagan, and shall be beaten with more stripes.

The precepts of Jesus Christ are many, though all depending on one principle ; but they are, most of them, very plain. Many people flatter themselves that if they observe some of these, they may violate the rest. And all but true and genuine believers reserve some command or other, which they think they may indulge themselves in transgressing, in consideration of their obedience to the other commands. But I tell you, friends, that that man who suffers himself to violate any one command, which he knows Christ has given,

is not a Christian but a hypocrite. He is a foolish man, who buildeth his house upon the sand of his own presumption, and when the judgment of God shall be made manifest, it shall fall, and great shall be the fall of it. “For why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?”—Luke vi. 46. The man who obeys so many of Christ’s commands, and suffers himself to set at nought the rest, is not serving Christ but his own humour, and is as much a disciple of Christ, as Herod was of John the Baptist. That reprobate king heard John gladly, and even did many of the good things which the holy prophet recommended; and then imprisoned him, and then cut off his head; that is, in other words, he obeyed John so far as pleased his own humour, and when it pleased his humour he murdered John. If any one does what Jesus Christ enjoins, through respect to his authority, he has the same reason for complying with all his injunctions, as for complying with any of them; and those people who think they may make an election, may pick and choose what commands they shall attend to, and what they shall dispense with, set their own authority clearly above that of Him, whom, like self-deceived hypocrites, they yet call “Lord, Lord.” But though they have named the name of Christ, him, as their Lord and Master, they have not known, and their judgment tarrieth not. “I never knew you; depart from me ye that work iniquity.”

It is a command of Jesus Christ, that his followers should assemble on the first day of the week, to celebrate his resurrection from the dead, and their own with him. The first Christians universally did so. Paul charges them, by the authority of Christ, “not to forsake the assembling of themselves together;”

and to them, thus assembled, our Lord himself gives this promise of his presence and blessing, "I am in the midst of them, to bless them and to do them good."—John xx. 19; Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. xvi. 2; Heb. x. 25; Matt. xviii. 20.

It is also specially to be noted, for it is a truth too little impressed upon believers themselves, that the promises given to Christians are made to them, not as separate and distinct individuals, but as members of that body—the Church—which Christ hath purchased with his own blood. It is only when individual believers are collected together, it is when the separate stones are builded together into a house, that they become "an holy temple," and "an habitation of God through the Spirit." Christ's body is the Church, and as a man's spirit dwells in his body, so, in Christ's body, his spirit dwells. Every stone in the temple derives its use and beauty from their arrangement and order, their mutual connection and dependence; every member of the body derives its importance from the union of all the members, and from the common life and will which inform and actuate the whole. What is a single stone of the temple out of its place? What a single member cut off from the body? It has neither beauty nor use. So it is, when "we have fellowship one with another," that "the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin." A man, disunited from the body of Christ, has no connection with Christ, the head of that body. He is a dead branch, "which cannot bear fruit of itself." If we would have Christ for our Master, we must join ourselves to Christ's household.—1 Cor. iii. 16, 17; Eph. iv. 4, 6, 12, 16, and v. 25–30; 1 John i. 7.

One symbol of this union among Christians is their partaking of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. They are "the household of faith," and, as one household, they all sit at one table, eat of one bread, drink of one cup. Christ is the Master of the feast, and he calls them no longer servants but friends; for they are enfranchised now from their servile estate, being incorporated into the body of Christ, by which the Son of God hath made them indeed free, constituting them both sons and heirs of God. That union is both signified and ratified by the act of communion in the sacrament of our Lord's Supper, as the Apostle Paul fully and plainly teaches.—1. Cor. x. 17, and Rom. xii. 5; also 1 Cor. xii.; John xv. 1-61; Gal. vi. 11; iv. 1-7.

Another symbol of the oneness of believers in their common Master and Head, consists in their assembling, in his name, on the first day of the week; by which act they assume the attitude and appearance of one family, congregated to worship their common Father, through his only begotten Son, by whom they enjoy access with confidence to "the throne of the heavenly grace." For, though known unbelievers are not excluded from these assemblies, as they are from partaking of the Lord's Supper, but are rather invited to frequent them, yet the assembly itself is always regarded as a congregation of Christians, sons of God, and members of Christ's body; and those without profession, who may happen to be present, are viewed as strangers, whom the family permit to be present, and to partake of the children's bread, in hope that they may be persuaded to join themselves to the household of the faith, and to enjoy the privileges of the sons of God.—1 Cor. xiv. 23-25.

My friends, I will give you ten reasons, which shew the duty, the propriety, the wisdom, and advantage of attending the public worship of God on the Lord's day; which ten reasons, I know, no man on earth can answer, and no man but an absolute and hardened infidel will attempt to answer. And I pray God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, that the consideration of them may induce many who have hitherto absented themselves from the house of God, to obey his ordinance, "not to forsake the assembling of themselves together, as the manner of some is."

1. The first reason of this duty, is one which will settle the matter with all men who do not despise the authority of God that made them, and the book which contains the record of his will,—*God commands it*. That he unquestionably does so, I have proved above, in the most undoubted manner. "He, therefore, that despiseth, despiseth not men but God." Think not, O sinner, this question, or this controversy, is betwixt thee and me, or any worm like me. No! It is God who is thine adversary in this quarrel. It is He that made thee, whom thou dost resist, and if thou dost prevail, it is Omnipotence thou must conquer. I can tell you God's will, which you may read for yourself in God's own book. That done, God and you must settle the matter, with what issue the day of judgment will shew. Oh God! that thy creatures should resist thy will, which is, "that they should not perish,"—should defy thy power, which can cast them into hell more easily than I can write the words. God give the reader grace to consider this before the divine power, now mighty to save, shall have become mighty to destroy him.

2. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."—Rom. x. 9, 10. So, then, it is the faith of a risen Saviour, not concealed, *but publicly professed, to the glory of God and the strengthening of our brethren*, by which we must, and without which we cannot, be saved. It is essential to our salvation, not only that we have, but that we profess to have, faith in Christ raised from the dead. That the latter is no less necessary than the former, the Holy Scriptures most positively assert in numerous places.—Rom. x. 9, 10; Matt. x. 32, 33; Luke xii. 8; John xii. 42, 43; Phil. ii. 11; 1 John iv. 2–15. Now, as the design of the Christian assemblies being held on the first day of the week, is to commemorate Christ's resurrection on that day, as the very argument of the Christian's faith, and of his hopes of immortal life, so, when we meet together at these seasons, we, by so doing, profess our faith in our Lord's resurrection; or, to use the expression of St. Paul, "we confess with our mouth that God raised the Lord Jesus from the dead," which confession the apostle affirms to be equally indispensable to salvation as "the believing that doctrine with the heart." So that, when any one wilfully absents himself from these assemblies, instituted for the purpose of celebrating the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, that man is understood to abjure and deny the resurrection; that is, he professes to be an unbeliever, and so excommunicates himself from all the benefits which they enjoy, "who are risen with Christ." Reader, are you one of those who fail

thus to acknowledge your faith in a Saviour raised from the dead? Expect not any of the fruits of his resurrection. Do you plead that you believe with your heart that God raised his Son from the dead? I refer you to the inspired servant of Christ, who expressly says, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth." It is vain to plead, that "with the heart man believes unto righteousness," when it is added, "and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." God will have men believe, and not only so, but he requires they make public profession of that belief. He also appoints the way in which that profession shall be made. So that here, as before, "he that despiseth, despiseth not men but God." Reader, are you content to be excluded from all share in the resurrection of Him "who liveth, and was dead, and is alive for evermore, and hath the keys of hell and of death?" If you have no part in his resurrection, over you the second death must exert its power. Are you willing to be excluded from Christ's household for ever and ever? Alas! there is only another household of which you can be a member, and its home is the place of "hypocrites and unbelievers," the smoke of whose torment "ascendeth up for ever and ever," where "their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched." He that is not for Christ openly and avowedly, is against him. No man is of Christ's household who absents himself from Christ's house. Without profession there is no proper Christianity, for profession is as much a part of this as faith itself is. This cannot be too much impressed upon you. He that seeks not to join himself to the Church of Christ, is joined to the Synagogue of Satan. May God give to those careless sinners, who mind none of

these things, repentance not only to the understanding, but to the acknowledging of the truths here written.

3. A third reason why you should frequent the Church is, that *you cannot be so well employed any where else*. I have not found many who pretended they could. The case is so clear, in the eyes of those whose minds are not utterly blinded, that they generally do not seek to justify, but only to excuse, their neglect. Some, however, are more hardened, alleging they can spend their time as well meditating in the fields or reading at home. I can tell these people, without any inquiry into their case, that very few of their meditations are about God and their immortal souls, and very little of their reading respects those important subjects. They will not deny this, if they speak the truth; but if they do deny it, it is very obvious to ask, whether the God they meditate about, or read about, ceases to exist so soon as they cease to read or meditate about him? If not, why so few of their meditations are of God at other times, and in their general conduct? Alas! they are nothing the better of their meditations, if they have them. But the truth is, of the God who made heaven, and earth, and themselves,—of the God who speaks in the Bible, and in their consciences, they do not, and they dare not think. And they either have no thoughts of a god at all, or only of that god whom the infidels have created for themselves, “in their own image and after their own likeness.” A god who exists not but in their own foolish imaginations, and to whom they may call in time of need, as the infidel Israelites did, “O Baal hear us; but there was no voice, nor any that answered.” Let us turn from what such men may say, to what they do. And I ask, Is it not a fact, that the



time which ought to be devoted to the public worship of God, is spent, by them, idly, at the very least, in doing no good, on the very most favourable supposition, but, in the vast majority of cases, far worse than idly; in drunkenness, and all manner of sensuality and dissipation? In short, the neglecters of public worship turn God's Sabbath into a devil's holiday. And the time which God has mercifully given them to separate themselves from the toils and necessary cares of life, and to take, by holy exercises, a decided step towards heaven, and to acquire an impetus thitherward which may carry them on in that direction, against the current of adverse influences which besets them during the other days of the week; this precious time, men, through a cursed cruelty against themselves, abuse, and by doing double work that day, in all manner of sin, quicken their speed downward to destruction, as if resolved that "the goodness of God, which leadeth to repentance," shall ripen them into tenfold impenitence and impiety in this present life, and tenfold perdition in the life to come. Oh, friends, consider this, that, in the good providence of God, one whole day in seven is allowed you, that, on that day you may attend, more exclusively, to the things which belong to your peace; and whether you spend it in actual sin, or in idleness, which is a sin, you are to be judged by God, as those who have enjoyed that opportunity and means of grace.

4. *While thousands of men have been made better by attending the public worship of God, no man was ever known to be made worse by such attendance.* The only sure way to judge of the tendency of a thing, is to learn what effects it has commonly produced. If two classes of men, in circumstances altogether similar, who

live in the same place, work at the same employments, receive the same amount of wages, have enjoyed the same education, are found to be the one more industrious, more honest, more sober, more humane and benevolent, in short, better than the other, and if the only visible difference in the customs of the two classes be, that the one regularly attends Church while the other as uniformly neglects it, I suppose no reasonable man would hesitate to conclude that the church-going was the thing that caused all the difference between the two. Or if any shall object that Church attendance is in this case, not the cause, but an effect, and that the one class of persons are not better because they go to Church, but they go to Church because they are better, I do not see that my argument would lose very much, even though I should admit that representation. For that must be a good place which the good frequent and the bad avoid, it must be agreeable to the character of the one, and repugnant to that of the other. Moreover, even on this supposition, we must allow that the services in which the decent, and orderly, and respectable portion of the community engage in the Church on the Lord's day, must have, at least, the effect of keeping them good; of preserving and cherishing their virtues. How important a service this is, none will question, who observes the strong tendency to degenerate, to fall off and grow worse, which human nature everywhere exhibits.

But the people who regularly attend Church, and who, as a body, must be allowed to be so much superior in morality and religion, to those who absent themselves, that the two parties cannot bear a moment's comparison, those people must be allowed themselves to know

what effect their joining in the public worship of God, every week, has had upon their feelings and conduct. Well, let any individual of sound understanding, in the whole class, be consulted, and if he do not give it, as his decided conviction, that the good which is in him has been mainly produced, and the evil chiefly restrained, by his attending the house of God ; that he has got good, and good only, by his being a public worshipper of the living God, in the name of Jesus Christ, I am willing to give up the whole argument. For,

5. Of all the millions of men who have, in all ages of the Church, attended the public ordinances of religion, no man of sound mind was ever known to regret his having attended them, *but thousands have lamented most deeply and bitterly their failing to wait upon God in that manner* ; and very many have connected the commencement of that course, which led eventually to abandoned wickedness,—terminated, in numerous instances, on the scaffold,—with their forsaking “ the assembling of themselves together,” with the people of God. Those who have opportunities of conversing much with people in sickness, and on their death-beds, when the turbulence of passion is calmed, and they are enabled to form a deliberate and just estimate of things, know that one of the bitterest regrets of those persons, who have lived carelessly, is that they have absented themselves from the public worship of God ; and of those who cannot charge themselves with that omission, a common subject of sorrow is, that they had not attended more diligently to those public services, and improved them more. An intelligent sceptic, with whom I happened to have much intercourse on his death-bed, and who came, at last, to a most painful state of doubt

and hesitation as to the truth of Christianity, confessing that the only reason now, which appeared to himself to prevent him resting in the Gospel as true, was, that his mind had got into an obstinate habit of considering it false, and who died, not sure whether he believed or not, expressed the greatest regret on this subject that he had never, during many years, attended Church, and declared himself firmly resolved, if his life was spared, to spend his Sundays in the Church, as the place where people get more good and less evil than in any other place. Let me add,

6. As the general habit of church-going is always accompanied with a general decency and regularity of behaviour, so, on the other hand, *the general neglect of public religious worship is universally marked by a general profligacy of manners*, by the prevalence of open and gross sins, drunkenness, fornication, theft, adultery, violence, murder, and all the other more heinous violations of the laws of God and of man. It is a fact well known to those acquainted with the police of large towns, that criminals, apprehended and punished for breaches of the law, are almost universally, if not universally, persons who never enter a place of religious worship. And the districts and streets which produce the greatest number of culprits, are, without exception, those which have the smallest number of church-going inhabitants. For almost all the criminals are furnished by those places in which there are almost no inhabitants who attend Church, whereas in those streets in which the dwellers are almost all church-goers, there are almost no criminals, or absolutely none. Such a fact is worth ten thousand speculations.

We shall cease to wonder at the powerful and salutary

effects which undeniably result from attending the house of God, when we consider, that,

7. God, the Giver of all good, both for the present life and the life to come, *gives it under what conditions, and subject to what laws, he himself has seen fit.* He preserves our lives on condition that we take food, drink, sleep, and whatever else he has pointed out to us as necessary for that end. And unless we choose to comply with these means, in vain shall we expect God will preserve our lives. Again, food is promised to those ploughing, sowing, and reaping. And to those who choose to dispense with these operations, God makes no promise of giving “them day by day their daily bread.” So it is God’s ordinance that man, who cannot live without bread, “shall not live by bread alone,” but by that “word also which has proceeded out of the mouth of God.” The Almighty, who sustained the body of Moses, and Elijah, and of Jesus Christ, each of them forty days without food, could also sustain ours during that or any other period. He that gave food to the Hebrews in the wilderness, without other labour than that of gathering it, could supply us with it in the same manner. But experience shews that it is not God’s method so to do. In like manner, the Holy Spirit, who teaches us divine truth by means of the Word, could convey it into our minds without that instrument, as he did in the case of Christ’s apostles, whom he instructed by direct and immediate inspiration. But it is God’s prerogative, not ours, to determine how we shall be supported, illuminated, blessed. It belongs to the giver, not to the receiver, to fix the manner in which the gift shall be conveyed.

Now God has made over certain blessings to his Church as one body. Christ, who commands his ser-

vants, by his apostle, “not to forsake the assembling of themselves together,” promises “to be in the midst of them” so assembled, “to bless them and do them good.” The Lord Jesus illuminates by his Word,—strengthens by the Sacraments, his Church, collected together, separated from the world, and set apart unto himself. And if any man takes upon him to expect, for himself individually, and separate from the body, the Church, and without participating in the Word and Sacraments therein dispensed, those blessings, which are promised only to them who partake of these, being united to the household of the faithful, he is as presumptuous and as absurd, as if he should expect God would support his body without food, or supply that food miraculously, by the fowls of the air, as in the case of Elijah, or by raining it down from heaven, as happened to the Israelites in the desert. “It hath pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe.”—1 Cor. i. 21. And they who set aside God’s ordinances, and strike out private ways of their own, and so presuming to be wiser than God, do but furnish additional illustration of that very plain truth, that “the foolishness of God is wiser than men.”

8. It is also extremely worthy of remark, that the reading of God’s Word itself, though an invaluable means of grace, and without which the work of God’s Spirit is not usually carried forward in the minds of men, has not experimentally been found to be the general instrument of conversion. This has usually been accomplished by means of the Word of God, spoken by the living voice of a preacher. I say the Bible itself, though the great depository of Christian truth, the rule according to which both ministers of the Gospel should regu-

late their preaching, and the people their faith and conduct, the Bible itself has never produced any great or general revolution in men's minds or conduct, without some living voice to direct attention to its doctrines, and to stir them up with the energy and power of audible appeals, to take heed unto the things written in the Book of Life. The voice and animation of a living instructor are needful to send men home to their Bibles, to open those volumes, on which, as Whitefield too truly said, "The dust often lies so thick that one may write on it '*damnation*.'"

9. In all God's appointments there is *manifold wisdom*, a *certain fitness to effect the end in view*, besides his special blessing attending those who faithfully comply with his ordinances. When we suppose any thing, which God institutes, arbitrary or casual, such suggestion always proceeds from our ignorance.

In our nature no principle is more wonderful than sympathy, whereby any emotion is heightened indefinitely by our being associated with others who are actuated by the same emotion. The effects of this peculiarity in our mental constitution, are too obvious to require illustration. Our Maker has been pleased to impress this capacity into the service of our highest interests; and knowing that each of a hundred, or of a thousand persons, will be vastly more affected with any sentiment, whether of gratitude, veneration, hope, joy, love, when they are assembled together, and have the truths, calculated to excite it, presented to all their minds, at one and the same moment, than they could be, were these truths conveyed to each individual mind separately; God, to make this law of our nature available in inspiring and deepening religious feelings, has appointed that

his servants should, in all ages, present their worship collectively, and so the devotion of each be rendered more lively and intense by the aiding power of sympathy with all his fellow-worshippers. God's servants have ever felt their need of this mutual aid. Doubtless, the following has happened often in the history of the Church, though but once in express language recorded : "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another."—Mal. iii. ; and always with the same comfortable and precious result. "And the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name," &c. I understand that these godly men, so richly blessed, were those who, in times of general depravity, held meetings for social prayer and conference, that they might, by these means, strengthen themselves in the Lord their God. The book of the Acts of the Apostles is full of illustrations of the use of this principle, in upholding men to do and endure the will of God. And "these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they were written for our admonition."

10. Lastly, *men are necessarily much occupied during the other six days of the week in the affairs of this life.* Food and raiment are things so essential, that people neither can nor ought to want them ; and in the labour necessary for obtaining these things, the bulk of mankind are compelled to spend most of their time from Monday morning till Saturday night. How merciful, then, that God has been pleased to secure to us in seven one whole day, in which we have nothing else to do but to serve God,—consider our ways and the eternal interests of our souls,—learn the will of our Maker, Go-



vernor, Judge, and our duty towards Him, our fellow-Christians, and ourselves,—pray, meditate, and prepare for heaven, using the present rest as they should do, who desire that “rest which remaineth for the people of God!” A man’s guilt in misusing a mercy, is great in proportion to the greatness of the mercy which he misuses. Such often complain they want time for religious exercises during the other days of the week. I believe no man, disposed to serve God, ever did, or ever could, want opportunities of serving him; for though he may enjoy no leisure to retire to a place by himself to pray or read God’s Word, yet prayer may ascend, which God shall both hear and answer, while the person that offers it is labouring with his hands in his calling. But let us suppose the complaint well-founded, and that people are unavoidably so much occupied, during six days of the week, about this world, as really to have no time for attending to the mighty interests of the next, still the seventh day returns—a precious opportunity—then they are disengaged from business, the shops are shut, the sound of the forge and the hammer is not heard, no one bears burdens, the plough stands still, the beast rests, or would rest, were he not compelled to labour in dragging those to a distance who are not satisfied to profane the Lord’s day at home—the Churches are open, the bell invites to go up to the house of prayer, the multitude of the well-doing population are crowding to that place where they are exhorted to all good, and dehorted from all evil, by reasons no less weighty and awful than the favour and the wrath of Almighty God, their weal or their woe, throughout an endless being. The place where men’s minds are drawn away from the petty but engrossing

frivolities of this dying life, to be concentrated on the sublime affairs of eternity—where together they join in deprecating that wrath which they all, as partakers of one common nature, have merited, and in celebrating that infinite love which has redeemed them all with the precious blood of God's own Son, and calls them to be partakers of a divine nature even now, and hereafter of God's kingdom and glory—that is the place where men are most likely to receive the most powerful motives to holiness, and the strongest defences against sin; and as his allowing them that opportunity every week, is a signal instance of the goodness of God, and a powerful evidence that “He will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth;” so the individual that, by neglecting, despises that ordinance and opportunity of grace, puts himself deliberately out of the way of God and goodness, of heaven and of happiness; nor is it to be conceived, that he who turns his feet from the way which God has himself pointed out and sanctioned, can ever find God by any other way.

If there had been no time of rest allowed men, they might, perhaps, have been able to frame some apology for themselves at the dreadful day of judgment: “We were so engrossed unavoidably in providing food and raiment, and the things needful for the body, that time to think of the future we had none. This we could not help: it was the necessary result of the constitution of things under which we were born.” This, though not solid, sounds plausibly. But God will allow sinners no plausible apology. He will condemn them on grounds not only just, but so evidently and undeniably just, that the condemned themselves must

acknowledge the justice of their condemnation. Since, then, all men among us enjoy one day in seven, on which they may rest from their worldly cares and labours,—since, also, they possess the opportunity of joining in the public worship of God, and of hearing the Gospel, the good news of salvation, preached—if men choose to spend that sacred, that precious time, idly, or even worse than idly, can guilt itself imagine an excuse? Will not such persons be speechless? “They will not be saved, nor come to the knowledge of the truth.”

But people who neglect Church, surely have something to allege in their own defence. They must have some reason. I will set down, and briefly consider, all the excuses for neglect of public worship, which I remember to have heard.

1. Some people say, “They know already, all that is taught in the Church.” How can they tell what may be taught, when they are not present? But this apology is quite unfounded, the persons who make it being either infidels, or very weak and presumptuous people, who pretend to be wise in a matter of which in truth they are very ignorant. But let us suppose them to know the truths of religion, as well as they flatter themselves they do. What then? Has your son heard he should honour his father and his mother? Because he has heard that command, and may conceit he knows it, must he not hear it any more? Must you not tell it him again, even as often as he seems to forget it? It is no less foolish to say you have no need to have God’s commands repeated and enforced upon you because you have heard them all before. God’s Word is called “the bread of life.” Bread is a thing

people live on day after day ; and a hungry man would think it a very bad reason why he should not eat bread to-day, that he had eaten of it yesterday. If you were hungering and thirsting after righteousness, you would reckon it equally absurd to allege the fact that you had heard the word of life some time before, as a reason why you should not hear it now.

2. Some say, " They can read the Bible at home." I answer, they who go seldomest to Church read the Bible seldomest at home. If you will examine into the matter, you will find, that the reading of the Bible is almost confined to those families who frequent the house of prayer. Among the members of other families, you will discover that their lessons from God's Word are just about as few as their visits to God's house. But, if you do read your Bible at home, it will not permit you to remain at home ; it will send you to the Church, if you regard what you read there, otherwise why do you read it ? for among its injunctions you will find this one, " Not to forsake the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is."

3. Many people tell me, " They are too tired to go to Church." It cannot but appear very wonderful, that these same persons should not be too tired to walk in the fields, to visit their friends, nay, to walk to haunts of dissipation twice as far off as the Church is. Very wonderful, that a man who on Saturday morning is not so tired but he can work ten or eleven, or even twelve hours, grows so tired on Sunday morning, that he is not able to rest in Church, where he has nothing to do but to hear ! Some men walk six days in the week to their work, and from it again, as far as they are required to do in order to attend the public worship of

God; but fatigue is a Sunday malady. It must be driven off when a thing so important as daily bread is concerned; but when nothing is to be done but the worshipping of God, the giving him thanks for that daily bread, and the seeking the bread of life—then fatigue may be indulged. And the man who would be ashamed to answer his master, “I am too tired to begin your work to-day,” is not at all ashamed to reply, when God calls him, “I am too tired to work the work of God.” But while he utters the words, his conscience tells him, this excuse is from the “father of lies” and of false pretences. It is indeed not to be denied, that in large country parishes there are always a multitude of people so far distant, that many of them, the young, the aged, the infirm, cannot attend Church. Attendance there, to such persons, is impossible, and to all it is inconvenient. But let these latter take heed, lest they magnify what is only an inconvenience, and one, too, which they constantly overcome when temporal interests are concerned, into an insurmountable barrier between them and their spiritual interests.

4. The most common apology I meet with is, “want of suitable clothing.” In a former parish of which I was minister, the excuse was, want of room in the Church, or want of ability to pay seat-rents. The excuse was too good in many cases, and it served the purpose to those who wanted an excuse. In the parish of Campsie, the Church is very large, and there are no seat-rents; important advantages, and evidently not without great effect on the numbers who attend public worship. But do they who are determined to excuse themselves, not find an excuse? By no means; and a wonderful reason it is, in a parish where employment

abounds, and is generally well paid, and where some ten thousand pounds are supposed to be annually spent on whisky: "We want clothes." Many offer this apology, who might clothe themselves and all their families every year decently more than once, with the money they spend on spirituous liquors. Alas! how great a price such men pay, to get themselves and their families damned! How intolerably they tax themselves to be kept out of the way of good, and out of the kingdom of heaven, to be cut off from all happiness here and hereafter! One would suppose the way of sin, the way to hell, led to some glorious termination, that people are willing to pay so exorbitant a toll to be allowed free passage on it. My friends, suffer me to reason with you a little on this subject. Why should your poor clothes hinder you coming to the house of God? Can you not hear in poor clothes? Does the meanness of your raiment stop your ears? Or is the house of God shut against all but those who can afford to put on gay and costly apparel? However the case may be elsewhere, it is not so here. In this parish the Church is open to all, and no man is excluded. "The rich and the poor meet together; the Lord is Maker of them all." For my own part, I cannot comprehend why—putting pride, and a custom, which has done at least as much harm as good, out of the question—poor clothes should keep any one from the Church, any more than from any other place, or any other employment. People work in their clothes how bad soever, they eat, and walk about, and go to market in them, and their neighbours can only see on Sundays what they see every day, and in the Church what they would probably see on the street, or by the wayside.

Perhaps you think people would talk about you if you were so singular as to come to Church in your working clothes. Yes, I believe they would. The good people would say, "I hope he is a good man that, who dares come to worship God in a fustian jacket." I think this might well compensate for any remark the thoughtless and foolish could possibly make; leaving your duty and the approval of your own conscience out of the question. But do you imagine nobody remarks your not going to Church, and your hanging and loitering idly about all the Lord's day? If the remarks of your neighbours are what you fear, depend upon it you don't escape them now; but you are blamed by those whose ill opinion is censure, instead of by those whose censure is praise. Whether do you think it worse that people should say of you, "John is so poor that he goes to Church in his working clothes," or "John is such a reprobate that he never goes to Church at all?" The pride of dress has kept many thousands out of the house of God, and this is one of a thousand ways in which pride ruins sinners. Oh! friends, be persuaded, that though you are commanded to attend God's public worship, you are not required to attend there in fine or costly raiment. A wedding garment, indeed, you must have, but it is not a superfine coat, or a silk gown, but humble, penitent, teachable minds. And having these, you will be acceptable, though you come in rags. And, my friends, I would seriously exhort you, not to absent yourselves from the house of God till you get what you have persuaded yourselves is necessary clothing, but is not necessary. Such you may never get. Some persons, perhaps, into whose hands this address may fall, will remember the case

of an individual, who lately objected coming to Church until she “got things to go in,” which, she said, would very soon be the case, though at the time she was very decently dressed, but who was summoned to appear at the judgment-seat of Christ before she found things necessary to appear in the house of God ! So, my friends, it may be with you. Take heed lest death come, and judgment come, and eternity come, and the bitter pains of the second death come upon you, before you obtain what you suppose is necessary, but is not, for enabling you to attend the ordinances which God has appointed.

In conclusion, let me beg of every reader of this address, who absents himself from the house of God, that he will seriously consider whether the reasons and apologies by which he now excuses and strengthens himself in that neglect, be of such a kind, as are likely to satisfy his own conscience in the retrospect of his life, and in the prospect of eternity,—as are likely to satisfy Him, who shall “judge every man according to his works.”

“O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end !” May God bless these considerations to the reader’s conviction and edification, and to God be glory, through Jesus Christ ! Amen.

MANSE OF CAMPSIE,  
Nov. 1836.



---

**EDINBURGH :**

**JOHN JOHNSTONE, Printer, 104, High Street.**

# SELECT WORKS

PUBLISHED BY JOHN JOHNSTONE,

SUCCESSOR TO WAUGH AND INNES,

2, HUNTER SQUARE, EDINBURGH.

---

**COMFORT IN AFFLICTION:** A Series of Meditations. By the Rev. JAMES BUCHANAN, Minister of the Parish of North Leith. 8vo., 7s. 6d., cloth.

“This is my comfort in mine affliction; for thy WORD hath quickened me.”

“To those who are acquainted with the high character for personal piety, theological attainments, and professional usefulness of the excellent author of these Meditations, it may be enough to state, that they are in every way worthy of that distinguished Christian Minister. They abound with all the characteristics of Mr Buchanan’s richly endowed, highly cultivated, and thoroughly matured mind.”  
—*Presbyterian Review*.

“We have not read any work on the subject which equals it, either in the substantial matter which it brings before the afflicted for their consolation, or in the variety of its details. Were we desirous, indeed, that Affliction should be properly understood and improved, we could not recommend any book at all so well adapted for both purposes as this. We earnestly hope that it will soon find its way into every Christian family.”—*Scottish Guardian*.

By the same Author,

**THE TEMPLE OF GOD:** A Sermon Preached at the Opening of Newhaven Church, on Sabbath the 30th October 1836. Second edition. Fscap. 8vo., 6d.

**TWO SERMONS.** Christ’s Kingdom in its Relation to the Civil Power: “My Kingdom is not of this world.”—JOHN xviii. 36. And, The Christian Ministry in its Missionary Functions: “Compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.”—LUKE xiv. 21-23. Fscap. 8vo., 1s.

“We do not know where, in so small a compass, such accurate views respecting the two chief topics of ecclesiastical discussion in modern times, could be got.”—*Presbyterian Review*.

**THEOLOGICAL ESSAYS.** By the late JOHN BOWDLER, junior, Esq. of Lincolns Inn, Barrister-at-Law. 18mo., 3s. 6d. cloth.

These Essays form part of the *Select Pieces* of a highly accomplished and much lamented Author, the late JOHN BOWDLER, Esq. of Lincolns Inn, and were originally printed for private distribution by his father, JOHN BOWDLER, Esq. of Eltham.

They were afterwards published in two volumes 8vo., Price One Guinea, and the Work has gone through several editions.

**THE MUTUAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PASTOR AND PEOPLE.** A SERMON Preached on Sabbath, Sept. 4, 1836, in the South Parish Church, Aberdeen, on occasion of the introduction of Rev. W. K. Tweedie, to the pastoral charge of that Church and Parish. By the Rev. ALEX. DUFF, D. D., General Assembly's first Missionary to India. Second Edition. 8vo., 1s., stitched.

"This is a noble discourse, worthy of its noble minded author; clear, searching, ardent, eloquent throughout. It is admirably fitted to be useful both to ministers and people."—*Scottish Guardian*.

By the same Author,

**THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND'S INDIA MISSION;** or a brief Exposition of the Principles on which that Mission has been conducted in Calcutta: being the substance of an Address delivered before the General Assembly of the Church on May 25, 1835. Second edition. 8vo., 6d., stitched.

**EXTRACT of a LETTER** respecting the Wreck of the **LADY HOLLAND** East Indiaman, from the Rev. ALEX. DUFF, D. D., one of the Passengers in that Ship. 8vo., 6d., std.

**THE EXCITEMENT;** or, a **BOOK TO INDUCE YOUNG PEOPLE TO READ;** containing Remarkable Appearances in Nature, &c., and such incidents as are peculiarly fitted to arrest the youthful mind. For 1837. 8th series. 18mo., 4s. 6d. neatly bound.

"The 'Excitement' will be found gold from end to end. We have never in truth seen a book, the contents of which correspond better with its title, or were more calculated to promote the design intended by its publication."—*SATURDAY POST*.

"It would not be easy to speak in terms of too strong approbation of this volume, which, we hesitate not to say, will be found admirably calculated to excite in the youthful mind that love of reading which too much pains cannot be taken to encourage and promote."—*Edinburgh Literary Gazette*.

*The First Seven Series may also be had, 4s. 6d. each.*

**LETTERS CHIEFLY WRITTEN for COMFORTING** those **BEREAVED of CHILDREN or FRIENDS.** Collected from Books and Manuscripts, by the late JOHN ERSKINE, D. D., Edinburgh. Third edition, 18mo., 1s. cloth.

**THE AFFLICTED MAN'S COMPANION;** or a Directory for Families and Persons afflicted with Sickness, or any other Distress. By the Rev. JOHN WILLISON, Dundee. New Edition, 18mo., 2s. 6d. boards.

**OF TEMPTATION,** the **NATURE and POWER** of it, the **DANGER of ENTERING** into it, and the **MEANS of PREVENTING** that **DANGER.** By JOHN OWEN, D. D. New edition, 32mo., 1s. cloth.

**SKETCHES IN BIOGRAPHY**, designed to shew the Influence of Literature on Character and Happiness. By JOHN CLAYTON, Esq. 12mo., 5s. cloth.

"To young people possessed of a classical taste, this volume will present resistless charms. It is decidedly the best written thing of the kind that has found its way into our hands."—*Evan. Magazine.*

**THE CHURCH IN THE ARMY**, containing striking displays of the power of Divine Grace in the ARMY and NAVY. Second Edition, 4s. 6d., 12mo., cloth, lettered.

"It is suited to every rank of life, both military and civil, public and private."—*PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.*

"The work deserves to be extensively popular, for it has all that is faithful in Nature, in union with all that is beautiful and attractive in the work of Grace."—*LONDON CONGREGATIONAL MAGAZINE.*

"The interest excited by some of the narratives is of the most intense kind, and we doubt not that the work will soon find its way, not only into every cabin and every mess-room, but into the hands of all who take an interest in the progress of the Gospel. It is one of the most delightful books we ever read."—*Christian Instructor.*

**IMPRESSIONS OF THE HEART**, relative to the Nature and Excellency of Genuine Religion. By LADY COLQUHOUN, daughter of the late Sir John Sinclair, Bart. Second Edition, 12mo., 3s. cloth.

"This delightful work is characterized by simplicity and tenderness of style, and a rich vein of evangelical sentiment, and of practical and experimental religion."—*Church of Scotland Magazine.*

By the same Authoress,

**THE KINGDOM OF GOD**, as to its Nature and Subjects. 12mo., 3s. 6d. cloth.

"We cannot fail to be gratified that one moving in such circles, is qualified to give such interesting statements and correct views of Divine truth as both these volumes contain.

"There is the evidence of sincere piety in every page of this volume. It seems to be the fruit of much experience and thought. There is a vein of Christian feeling pervading it, and a glow of devotion over all, that interest as much as they instruct—that please as much as they profit. We wish it all success."—*Presb. Review.*

"Few volumes are possessed of a more elevating and tranquillizing influence. We have risen from its perusal delighted and feasted, and shall rejoice to find that it reaches the hands of all our pious friends."—*Christian Instructor.*

**LORETTE**; or, The Interior of Female Convents; being the History of Louise, the Daughter of a Canadian Nun. 18mo., 2s. cloth, with two Engravings.

"The American edition of this Work has run through *seven* editions in a very short time. This volume admirably unfolds some of the fearfully demoralizing tendencies of the doctrine and practice of the CHURCH of ROME."—*British Preface.*

**THE YOUNG CHRISTIAN**, or a Familiar Illustration of the Principles of Christian Duty. By JACOB ABBOTT, Boston. 12mo., 2s. 6d. cloth.

"The Edinburgh publishers, by this reprint, have conferred another obligation on the Christian public."—*Ch. Freeman*.

By the same Author,  
**THE WAY FOR A CHILD TO BE SAVED.**  
Second Edition, 18mo., 1s. cloth.

"This little work is worthy of its author, and that is saying a great deal. We warmly recommend it as a valuable aid to parents in the instruction of their little ones."—*Congregational Magazine*.

**THE WAY TO DO GOOD; or, THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER MATURE.** Foolsap 8vo., 3s. cloth.

"We have read this book with much satisfaction. It is written in the very best style of this well known and popular author. We find everywhere throughout the volume the same clearness of statement, the same careful abstinence from abstract language and discussions, and the same profusion of narrative and imaginative illustrations, which are so remarkable in the other works of Mr Abbott."—*Presbyterian Review*.

**THE INFANT ANNUAL**, or a Mother's Offering.  
Second Series. Principally intended for Children from Four to Ten Years of Age. Square 12mo., 3s. 6d. neatly half-bound.

"This is a good little book. The authoress may lay her account of being a great favourite in the nursery."—*Christian Instructor*.

"All who take an interest in the happiness of the little world, would do well to make the work we are now noticing a reward for past and an inducement for future good conduct. This miniature album, without being gaudy, is sufficiently attractive; and the matter it contains is as appropriate to the infant's capacity, as its getting up is alluring to the youthful eye."—*Metropolitan Magazine*.

*Also the FIRST SERIES, 3s. 6d.*

**THE NURSERY OFFERING, and CHILDREN'S GIFT**, First Series: principally intended for Children. In square 12mo., beautifully bound in Arabesque Morocco, gilt leaves, with numerous Engravings, price 4s. 6d., or in cloth, titled, 3s.

"The exterior is neat and handsome, the embellishments, in their subjects and execution, abundantly captivating, and the stories are simple and entertaining, conveying at the same time much useful moral instruction."—*Scotsman*.

"A better present for children than this little work none could possibly desire or hope to obtain."—*Edinburgh Evening Post*.

*The SECOND SERIES is also published, 3s. cloth, or 4s. 6d. bound,*

**LAURA CUNNINGHAM**, or the Student and the Authoress, and other Tales. By the Author of Early Recollections. 18mo., 3s. 6d. cloth.

*John Johnstone, 2, Hunter Square.*

v

**THE NURSERY PLUTARCH.** By Miss SINCLAIR, Authoress of "Modern Accomplishments ; or, March of Intellect," &c. With frontispiece and cuts, 18mo., 2s. 6d.

"We, without hesitation, recommend it to the youthful Student of Roman History."—*Presbyterian Review*.

By the same Authoress,

**CHARLIE SEYMOUR.** 18mo., neatly half-bound. 3s. Coloured Frontispiece.

**HISTORY of the COVENANTERS in SCOTLAND.** By the Author of the "Histories of the Reformation," "Christian Church," &c. 2 vols. 18mo., 8s. 6d. cloth. Dedicated, by Permission, to the Rev. Dr M'Crie.

"We cordially recommend this work, expressing the hope that parents will put it into the hands of their children, that the ministers of the Presbyterian Churches will urge an acquaintance with it upon the candidates for admission to membership, and that the friends of pure and undefiled religion and civil liberty generally, will promote its circulation."—*The Covenanter*.

"It ought to take a high place among the popular works of the day, as furnishing a ready and accessible refutation of the calumnies which are vending against these confessors of Christ, these defenders of our sacred and civil privileges and rights. There is hardly a page where we do not meet with incidents of more real interest than any which modern fancy pours forth in her thousand works of romance." *Christian Instructor*.

**THE YOUNG SOUTH COUNTRY WEAVER,** or a Journey to Glasgow. A Tale for the Radicals ; and **MAITLAND SMITH, the MURDERER,** a True Narrative. By the Rev. HENRY DUNCAN, D.D., Ruthwell. Second edition, 12mo., 2s. cloth.

**SELECT ESSAYS UPON DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL SUBJECTS.** By the late Rev. WILLIAM M'EWEN, Minister of the Gospel, Dundee. New edition, 12mo., 3s. 6d. cloth.

**LIFE of the REV. JAMES RENWICK,** the last of the Scottish Martyrs. By the Author of the History of the Covenanters. 18mo., 2s. cloth.

"We would willingly give many extracts from this volume, but it will do the reader more service to persuade him to peruse the whole at length."—*Presbyterian Review*.

**ADVICE to RELIGIOUS ENQUIRERS,** respecting some of the Difficulties arising from the Present State of Society. By JAMES MATHESON, Durham. 12mo., 4s. boards.

"Nothing can be more judicious than the manner in which Mr M. has executed his task ; and the work is calculated to do extensive good."—*Eclectic Review*.

*Lately Published, Price Seven Shillings,*

Forming an Elegant Volume, containing upwards of 700 Pages  
Imperial 8vo., Double Columns, Handsomely Bound in  
Embossed Cloth, and Lettered,

VOLUME FIRST

OF THE

**SCOTTISH CHRISTIAN HERALD,**

Conducted under the Superintendence of Ministers and  
Members of the Established Church.

“ In the present volume are contained original articles by upwards of one hundred Authors, clerical and lay ; and it is impossible, we conceive, to find, within the same limited space, in any other publication whatever, so great a quantity of varied and valuable information, bearing the authority of the names of the Authors.”

---

THE SCOTTISH CHRISTIAN HERALD continues to be published every Saturday Morning, in One Sheet Imperial Octavo, double columns, Price THREE HALFPENCE,—or in Monthly Parts, (of Four Numbers each,) Price SIXPENCE.

Photomount  
Pamphlet  
Binder

Gaylord Bros. Inc.

Makers  
Syracuse, N. Y.  
PAT. JAN 21, 1968

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
LIBRARY



11 571 138

BV  
4523  
L48

Lee

Address to people who  
Seldom or Never go to Church

DEC 16 '81

SEP 1

1945

FEB 3

Dr. Ames

Ernest S. Koerber

1955 Harry Chornet

DEC 18

SEP 6

FEB 7



*Lately Published, Price Seven Shillings,*

Forming an Elegant Volume, containing upwards of 700 Pages  
Imperial 8vo., Double Columns, Handsomely Bound in  
Embossed Cloth, and Lettered,

VOLUME FIRST

OF THE

**SCOTTISH CHRISTIAN HERALD,**

Conducted under the Superintendence of Ministers and  
Members of the Established Church.

“ In the present volume are contained original articles by upwards of one hundred Authors, clerical and lay ; and it is impossible, we conceive, to find, within the same limited space, in any other publication whatever, so great a quantity of varied and valuable information, bearing the authority of the names of the Authors.”

---

THE SCOTTISH CHRISTIAN HERALD continues to be published every Saturday Morning, in One Sheet Imperial Octavo, double columns, Price THREE HALFPENCE,—or in Monthly Parts, (of Four Numbers each,) Price SIXPENCE.

Photomount  
Pamphlet  
Binder

Gaylord Bros. Inc.

Makers  
Syracuse, N. Y.  
PAT. JAN 21, 1968

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
LIBRARY



11 571 138

BV  
4523  
.L48

Lee

Address to people Who  
Seldom or Never go to Church

DEC 16 '84

DEC 16

Ernest S. Koehnke  
Hampden

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
LIBRARY



11 571 138

